

T H E
Catholic Protestant
I N
SEVERAL PARTS.

To be continued:

P A R T I.

By R. HARRISON, M. A. K

INTOLERANCE towards the Professors of *any*
Religion,

Whether by Papists or Protestants,

Incompatible with the

Mission, Doctrine, and Example of CHRIST;

A N D

A plain Characteristic and Mark of Antichrist:

*Hast thou Faith? Have it to thyself before GOD.
Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that Thing
which he alloweth. Rom. xiv. 22.*

*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man! whosoever
thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another,
thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the
same Things. Rom. ii. 1.*

Y O R K:

Printed by A. WARD, in Coney-street, 1786.

THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PART I

BY R. HARRISON M.A.



WITH

AND

A Plain Chapter and Verse of Andrew

THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

T O
THE SERIOUS ATTENTION
OF THE
PROTESTANT ASSOCIATORS,
IN
NORTH AND SOUTH BRITAIN,
THE
FOLLOWING POPULAR DISCOURSE
IS, AT THIS SEASON,
IN THE
SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY,
HUMBLY OFFERED
BY THEIR FRIEND AND WELL-
WISHER,
A CATHOLIC PROTESTANT.

T O

THE SERIOUS ATTENTION

OF THE

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATIONS

IN

NORTH AND SOUTH BRITAIN



FOLLOWING POPULAR DISCOURSE

IS AT THIS SEASON

IN THE

SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

HUMBLE OFFERING

TO THEIR FRIEND AND WELL

WISHER

A CATHOLIC PROTESTANT

T H E

CATHOLIC PROTESTANT.

LUKE ix. 56.

FOR THE SON OF MAN IS NOT COME
TO DESTROY MEN'S LIVES, BUT TO
SAVE THEM.

THE hot and furious zeal expressed
by Christ's disciples, that brought
upon them this charitable censure
of their Lord, "Ye know not what man-
ner of spirit ye are of," was occasioned by
a different opinion about a religious cere-
mony, that had subsisted long between the
Jews and Samaritans, from the time the
people of Samaria had consecrated a temple
to Jehovah on mount Gerizim, and for-
saken the worship of God at Jerusalem.

In this dispute, the too common effect
of religious quarrels had taken place, the
harmony and mutual benefits of society
were interrupted,—charity and forbearance
had equally forsaken the contending parties,
and their spirits were grown so inveterate
and sour, that when the Samaritans under-

A

stood

stood that Christ and his followers were going up to Jerusalem to worship, they would not shew them common civility.

Prompted by this popular grudge and bitter prejudice, two of Christ's disciples call in the miraculous power of their Master to countenance and execute their mortal resentment, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as did Elias?"

But no pretence of zeal for God and religion; no appearance of affection for their despised Master, nor the mistaken precedent of Elias (who, by divine impulse and commission, prayed down vengeance from heaven on the messengers of his own destruction, in vindication of the supremacy of the living God, and to confound the blasphemous pretensions of the priests of Baal) no softening plea could justify the fierceness they had betrayed, nor shield them from the mild severity of our blessed Saviour's rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

You James and John, who now boast a concern for my slighted cause and person above my peaceable followers,—think not
to

to court my favour at the cost of your humanity, or to cover this rage of passion by your pretended zeal. The majesty and glory of my beneficent miracles will not stoop to your cruel revenge. Have you so soon forgot the tender lessons of love and forgiveness I prescribed towards your greatest enemies? Alas, you know not what sort of spirit ye are of;—my gospel disowns this rage of persecution;—connects the interests of both worlds, and consults the temporal peace and welfare of mankind, not less than their everlasting safety and happiness: But that no violence or corporal severity may hereafter disgrace the profession of my charitable religion,—be it recorded thro' all succeeding ages, that the "Son of Man came not into the world to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Here, Christians, you plainly see that a spirit of animosity and persecution, on any pretence of religion, cannot be condemned by a more express or higher authority than this in our text,

But if, in any good measure, we may answer your larger expectations on this interesting subject, (and, alas, too seasonable occasion) we proceed to expose briefly,

The injustice and absurdity of persecution on any account or pretence of religion; and to compare this both with the precepts and example of Christ, and with the character and practice of Antichrist. In the first place,

1. Every degree of force, and all sorts of persecution, on account or pretence of religion, is a manifest violation of the natural rights and liberties of mankind.

In all actions, wherein the peace and safety of the world are not concerned, every man is reasonably left to the guidance of his own understanding, and the conviction of his own mind. Where no injury is intended or done, no ground of quarrel or violence can in equity take place.

But what right of his neighbour does any man invade by his peaceable and conscientious choice of religion, and by worshipping his Maker in the way he thinks best for improving and saving his own soul?

If in this case men deem each other mistaken, charity indeed will induce their mutual

mutual concern, and may oblige their attempt to give and receive better information: But this gives neither party a right to hate, molest, or punish, as neither of them are hereby any way injured; and the immutable law of justice forbids the innocent to suffer, who neither offers nor designs an injury to his neighbour.

Every man's duty to God binds him, indeed, to an impartial search after truth; to a sincere discovery and profession of religion by such helps and abilities as are afforded him for that purpose; and whoever does this with serious care and diligence, has the satisfaction of doing his duty as a reasonable creature, and may be confident that, if, in some points, he misseeth truth, he shall not however lose the reward of his diligence and sincerity in seeking it, from God, the maker of his frame, and disposer of his outward condition, to whom every man is accountable, who demands of his fallible earthly creatures not the perfection of angels, but the sincerity of men; and the only capable inspector and judge of the human heart, and the goodness of its intentions, will doubtless accept men in proportion to them.

Yes,

Yes, to his own master every man stands or falls. God, whose Providence over human affairs leaves men in this world liable to mistake, will not surely require them never to be mistaken. The Man he hath ordained to judge the world in righteousness, is, moreover, our merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God, having himself felt our infirmities, and well knowing how to have compassion on the ignorant and for them that are out of the way, has, for our satisfaction and encouragement, condescended to declare by his apostle Paul, that in the last day he will accept every willing mind according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

Men, therefore, in the same sincere love and search of truth, are in the same way to divine favour and acceptance; well-meaning mistakes may attend them to the gates of heaven, into which no presumptuous unreformed sinner shall ever enter, so that all wise conscientious people, who believe in their hearts and confess with their mouths that Jesus is the Christ, who love their common Lord and Saviour in sincerity, and follow his gospel as the rule of their faith and manners according to their best judgments and several abilities,
all

all such wise and conscientious believers will still centre in christian forbearance, peace, and charity, notwithstanding any unavoidable difference or innocent mistakes that may subsist in the degrees, correctness, or perfection of their christian knowledge.

Every man then, or every body of men, whoever they be, who practice force or terror against those who peaceably dissent from them in matters of religion, and in order to do what they deliberately apprehend well pleasing to God, and of moment to the improvement and good of their souls, do by this means affront the understanding, and invade the unalienable rights and sacred liberty of their fellow-creatures: They herein usurp the province of heaven and invade its high tribunal; and, by setting themselves above God, stand chargeable with a greater crime than Lucifer who attempted an equality with his Maker.

Nor is persecution on the score or pretence of religion more an injury to men, and bold impiety towards God, than it is big with absurdity, being in the second place

2. 'A' means without an end, that always manifestly defeats the very purposes that pretend to justify it.

Every man's reason and conscience are his own, and he is to make the best use he can of both; nor can he justly be disturbed or hindered herein, since he alone is to answer at last for the faculties he has received from God, and the use and improvement he has made of them.

A misguided zeal for religion itself, or the instigation of some worldly interest and ambition, are the cause and motives that give life and operation to this unnatural mischievous spirit of imposition and cruelty, whereby the bigots of every sect are prompted to attempt uniformity of external profession, in order to secure and make proselytes to the church and party they have espoused, in the way of compulsion and severity, instead of the gentle, the only christian methods of argument and persuasion.

But, however the cause of truth and the salvation of souls may, indeed, be pretended as their charitable motives to force men to the profession of the right faith, to
drive

drive them into the true church, and to hold them in that supposed sure and only way to heaven, this holy violence was never thought of before an interested clergy and arbitrary power had contrived and inflicted it.

The lust of worldly emoluments and distinction may steal insensibly into the heart of man, and cause him to dream of serving God by his spiritual tyranny; nevertheless it must be abhorred, and will be condemned by every sober dictate of humanity and reason.

If the Father of the spirits of all flesh has indeed subjected the public conscience of men to the command of any of their fellow-creatures, let those who have it produce their commission; and then claim our implicit obedience.

The infallible authority of Popes, Councils, and Synods, rests upon their own confidence: They differ from themselves as from others, and it is a bare-faced impiety to sacrifice private conscience (the viceroy of God) to the doubtful decrees and arbitrary tribunals of men.

B

What

What influence can persecution boast to promote the glory of God or the salvation of men?

Truth is founded on evidence, it is propagated by argument and conviction; but disowns brutal force, and a violent defence is sure to prejudice her reputation.

What is faith? An act of the understanding, not of the will. What is religion? A reasonable service summed up in the love of God and our neighbour, and to be performed always with an honest heart and willing mind. But as no man can himself believe whatever he pleaseth, it is in vain in others to force their convictions upon him; and he must have lost his understanding very far, who attempts to inform his neighbours by persuasive blows, instead of conclusive arguments.

What is it then that force or terror can effect in religious matters, but to unite men in a spirit of ignorance or by the bond of hypocrisy, which gives open countenance and support to the shameful cause of ignorance, dissimulation, and implicit faith? By such arbitrary and cruel demands, wherewith every compliance without

out or against the clear convictions of a man's own mind, is a plain sin.

And ill does a persecuting spirit consult the glory of God, which is not only a strong temptation to hypocrisy, but the plague and scourge of the strictest sincerity. Persecution, that opens her bosom, and cherisheth every comer though he leaves his conscience behind him, but reserves her racks and gibbets for the truly religious, who have adorned and obliged the world with their social and beneficent virtues; in short, which first tempts men to mock God with their diffimulation, and then gluts her revenge on all who bravely resist her violent and wicked temptations.

But their professions of charity to supposed Heretics is yet a more barbarous insult, to whom their tenderest mercies are cruelty, whom they attempt to profelyte by violence and without conviction; when, instead of awaiting their repentance, or attempting their recovery, their mad superstition puts them quick into the hands of Satan, and (in their own barbarous apprehension) dispatches them to hell as fast as possible.

B 2

Thus

*Importune & intemperance always
go together -*

Thus injurious and absurd is a persecuting spirit; and in whatever shape or degree it is encouraged and prevails, will always have a proportionable tendency to dishonour God, destroy conscience, and confound mankind.

Nothing surely can be more provoking to the supreme Governor and common Father of men, than thus to pervert the knowledge he has given us of himself for the good of his creatures, to their ruin, or to make his glory our pretence for destroying the very being and welfare of human societies.

And yet all this has been done in the name of God, and fathered upon the authority of his son Jesus Christ.

The corruption of the most catholic and best-natured religion in the world has sunk men below the character of Pagans or Atheists, and transformed the mild and social nature of man into greater fierceness than that of wolves or tigers.

This, no question, has been the chief obstruction in the conversion of barbarous nations to that most benevolent divine religion,

ligion, which, when truly represented, will never fail to approve itself to the common reason, as it is calculated for the universal benefit of the world.

For when an honest Savage beholds the fraud, cruelty, and inhuman persecutions of such pretended Christians, it is a natural expectation, what one must excuse if not commend in him, if he scorns to be converted by such men, and wraps his own religion more close about him.

But it is impious, it is blasphemy to impute the mischiefs of persecution to the genius or authority of the gospel, which is so expressly and severely condemned by the doctrine and example of its benevolent Author,

Christ came into the world, not to destroy men's lives but to save them. He came breathing grace and truth: His doctrine proclaimed God's good will to men: His miracles were works of beneficence, and in his example he was meek and lowly.

So far from persecution, he taught his disciples the most heroic and extensive charity

charity even to their worst enemies; to return good for evil, and to pray for them who should spitefully abuse and persecute them.

Blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are they who for righteousness sake are persecuted, (but not they who persecute) was his constant doctrine.

Nor can the folly and injustice of persecution be exposed with more strength or elegance than in his parable of the tares and wheat. Where both are ordered and permitted to grow together until the harvest, for this very reason, lest in plucking up the tares the fallible and prejudiced discernment of men should root up the wheat also. A task wisely deferred to his last righteous judgment and the execution of angels.

Agreeable to these his precepts was the example of our divine Master, whose life and character declare that he went about continually doing good; meek, lowly, merciful, and exhorting sinners to repentance, till he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and with his last breath prayed for those who not only rejected but crucified him.

So

So far was the Saviour of the world from proselyting men to his gospel by any severe compulsive methods, that "If ye will be my disciples, If any man will come after me," was his constant invitation; and "Will ye also go away," was his moving expostulation to prevent the desertion even of his chosen disciples,

Christ, you know, made his appearance in our world in a low state and humble figure; a plain discovery that his kingdom was not of this world. Here was no worldly pomp to allure, nor terror to compel men. Pure Christianity disowns such mean artifice and childish attractions, being firmly established on rational and divine evidence.

But had it comported with the purpose of his mission, and the spiritual kingdom of Christ, he doubtless would have appeared in a character more agreeable to the fantastic expectation of the worldly-minded Jews, in all the pomp and majesty of princes. Legions of angels might have attended his advent, and brought all nations of the earth submissive to his authority. Whereas, by the strength of its evidence, by the simplicity and excellence
of

of its doctrine, Christianity has found its way through the force of prejudice, and triumphed in the flames of martyrdom; as by the same gentle method of argument and virtuous persuasion it will continue to spread, until all the kingdoms of the earth shall confess Christ to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

Thus the authority of our Saviour's benevolent doctrine, and his seasonable rebuke of the intemperate zeal his disciples betrayed in our text, have afforded us great advantage to expose the mischiefs and absurdity of persecution on every possible account or pretence of religion, and to establish these premises by comparing them as well with the precepts and example of Christ, as with the revealed character and practice of antichrist.

The pertinent and profitable application of the preceding discourse, should hold out to popular notice and regard, that new command wherewith Jesus solemnly charged his apostles as his last will and legacy, viz. That they should love one another, (in the most peculiar and tender manner) even as he had loved them. This our duty and affection calls us to recommend

mend to the attention and obedience of this audience of Protestant Christians as being in the first place.

Love is
I. The fairest and most essential characteristic of the true disciples and church of Christ to the end of the world.

It is not external pomp and grandeur, nor the boasted number of its members, nor even the most correct system of opinions that constitute the true Church of Christ. Hereby, (says the great Christian Law-giver himself) hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another. John xiii. 34, 35.

Men who conspire and herd together in maintenance of absurd and immoral doctrines, but especially in practices tyrannical, cruel, and void of charity; these are the men to whom belongs (in the criminal sense) the character of Heresy, and the guilt of Schism, however they may boast of their numbers, antiquity, or of the powers and emoluments of this world.

But all who separate from them, in defence of the righteous cause of Virtue, Liberty, and god-like Benevolence; these
are

are worthy members who compose the true church of God and of Christ, be they many or few, and not less under its frowns and persecutions, than when the smiles and prosperities of the world are upon them. *

To seek and hold the truth in love, is essential to the temper and acceptance of a christian. This, this is the badge that graceth all who wear it; by which every genuine follower of his benevolent Lord and Saviour makes manifest, as well the sincerity of his obedience as the excellence of his profession.

All who bear not this badge, or hold his truth in uncharitableness, are strangers or apostates from the true church and catholic temper of Jesus Christ.

Such we have too plainly seen is the schism, faction, and apostacy of the present church of Rome, and a reformation from her manifold errors and horrid persecution, is indeed a glorious cause wherever it appears, and is founded on the principles of Reason and Scripture, of Liberty and Charity.

Having

* See a fugitive Sermon on the 5th of November, by the late judicious and liberal Dr. Benson.

Having seen the antichristian spirit and injuries of persecution so fully exposed, and severely condemned by our Saviour's benevolent doctrine and rebuke in our text, let this inform us in the second place,

2. That neither the corruption and abuse, nor even the murderous practices of any false, unworthy professors, of christianity can be any just reason or argument against the truth or excellence of the gospel itself.

We need not dissemble what, alas! is too notorious to be concealed, how the Bigots of *every sect*, in catching at the shadow, lose the substance of religion,

The ecclesiastical history of all ages and nations presents a constant scene of imposition and cruelty: For, alas! the passions and interests of this world will too commonly direct and pervert men's religious inquiries; they dispute not for truth but victory; and when reason and persuasion fail, the reigning party supports itself by violence and terror.

Nor has Christianity undergone a milder fate, the best religion has occasioned the worst mischiefs; mortal strife and cru-

elty have been baptized in the Roman church by the name of Christian Graces, and her deluded zealots have been instigated by a fierce and destructive spirit, that has converted the gospel of peace into an engine of cruelty, so as to cause the name of God our Saviour to be blasphemed among the Heathens.

But the just reproach of *these*, and of *all such like* corrupt professors of Christianity, can never fasten on the authority of our divine and good religion, while this remonstrance of its blessed Author, against the intemperate zeal even of his chosen disciples, stands on the record of the New Testament. But he turned and rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

It is greatly lamentable, but not incredible, if the best things have been perverted to the worst purposes, by the pride and ambition, by the ignorance and wickedness of men.

But is Christ, for this cause, the minister of sin? Or does the religion of nominal

nal Christians give the least countenance to the wickedness they practice? God forbid!

No, our blessed Saviour (in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge) foresaw this horrid abuse and profanation worldly-minded men would dare to make of his divine mission, unbounded generosity, and matchless love. When from the beginning he told his disciples, that he came not to send peace on the earth but fire and a sword: that the brother would deliver up the brother to death, and the father his child. "Yea, the time cometh, (says he) that whoever killeth you, will think that he does good service to God. And these things will they do, because they have neither known me nor my Father."—John xvi. 2, 3.

Finally, the benevolent design, and avowed end of our Saviour's mission,—
 "Not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," should bring to remembrance many signal and critical displays of the providence and power of Almighty God, in delivering our pious ancestors out of the hands of their *superstitious* and cruel oppressors; and call forth our pious and grateful

grateful acknowledgements for the *continued* protection and preservation of our civil rights and religious liberty, of *all* we should hold dear as Britons and genuine Protestant Christians,

What then is the right and acceptable way of testifying our gratitude to Almighty God, but to study his scriptures with care, and to reverence and obey his word in sincerity; to allow to others that liberty of private judgment we ourselves claim and happily exercise, abhorring uncharitableness towards any who peaceably differ from us, and a persecuting spirit in every shape and degree.

Certainly the wise and best expression of the liberty and gratitude of Protestant Christians, is to lay the great stress of our religion where the sacred Scriptures have fixed it. On the love of God and our brethren; on a due regulation of our appetites and passions; and on a steady and cheerful practice of every thing we believe and know to be good.

What signifies it to what church any man belongs, what profession of religion he makes, or what advantages for these
he

he possesseth, when at the same time he loves not God by keeping his Commandments: If he abuseth his liberty as a cloak of licentiousness, and in the midst of a flood of light shuts his eyes upon it, and shews his love of darkness, by leading a scandalous wicked life, which, of all others, is the blackest heresy, a flagrant corruption, the most notorious and fatal apostacy. Wherefore that our conversation may be in every respect as becometh the Gospel, God of his infinite mercy grant, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A CATHOLIC PRAYER.

GRacious Father of the spirits of all flesh, who condescendest to honour us with the character and privilege of thy Children and Servants, by making us capable of the reasonable duties and immense rewards of religion, and by sending into the world thy most beloved Son, to guide us by his doctrine, example, and infinite sanctions of his gospel, in the sure and best way to eternal life, perfection, and glory.

For

For all thy Son Jesus Christ has done, and taught, and suffered to reconcile our souls unto God, and conduct us to heaven, we most sincerely thank thee.

As the elect of God, holy and beloved, may we all put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving one another, as God by Jesus Christ forgives our forsaken sins.


Above all, may we put on charity the bond of perfectness, delighting and abounding more and more to the end of our lives, in that love of God and our brethren, which is the fruit of a living faith, the evidence of our reasonable and sure hopes, whereby we shall resemble thee, the Father of Mercies, and be made like unto thy dear Son, our benevolent Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who went about continually doing good to men's souls and bodies, and left us his example that we should follow his steps.

May it be our chief ambition and pious care to transcribe into our own tempers and conversation, the virtues and graces that eminently shone forth in him, till
we

we experience in our ourselves the same mind that was in Christ Jesus our Lord, and are gradually moulded into the same divine image from glory to glory.

May the same benevolent god-like temper begin, continue, and grow in us on earth that will fit us for heaven, and qualify our minds for the fellowship and happiness of the all-glorious society of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect; that when our faith shall turn to sight, and our hope concludes in enjoyment, our love of God and our brethren may abide and flourish for ever in thy presence, O God, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for ever. *Amen.*

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even the Father, who has loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you; working in you always what is well-pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be ascribed, by all his churches, everlasting praises. *Amen.*

 *Design'd and ready for the Press,*

T H E


Catholic Protestant, Part II.

V I Z.

**The Peril of HELL FIRE incurred
by denouncing it.**

**A popular and *critical* Discourse on Christ's
Caution to his Disciples in Matt. v. 22.**

28 SE60

 Designed and ready for the Press,

T H E

CATHOLIC PROTESTANT,

Third and last Part, viz.

The Distinction and opposite Effects
of sinless and criminal Anger.

A popular Discourse on Ephesians iv. 26.

Preached in the Year 1780,

Amidst the Perils and Sufferings of Britain,
by domestic Riots, and her Wars against
the united Powers of France and Spain, and
her revolted Colonies in North America,